

A GOAL down at half-time, Wycombe Wanderers hit back with an excellent second half performance to deservedly take three points from Saturday's visit to Hitchin in the Isthmian League Premier Division.

In ending Hitchin's six match unbeaten home record, Wanderers extended their own run without defeat to six games. The Blues are still placed third behind Tooting and Enfield, both winners on Saturday, but

By STUART EARP Hitchin Town 1, Wycombe Wanderers 3

this victory will have caused a few raised eyebrows in the Premier Division.

A 3-1 away win always looks impressive, especially against the fourth placed club in the table. It must be said, however, that it was only a late goal that gave the scoreline a convincing look, although Wycombe thoroughly deserved their success.

On the mark again was Derek Harris who bagged two goals to make it three in as many games. Wanderers have lacked a man to do the basic job of snapping up chances this season but

Derek seems to fit the bill perfectly. It won't surprise me if he finishes with over 20 goals this season. Tony Horseman got the other, by the way, from the penalty spot.

The story of this game can be separated into two distinctly different halves and was a clear case of one side adapting to the conditions on the day. Like most other games throughout the country, this match was played in a howling wind that made good football difficult to say the least. A hard, bumpy pitch didn't help either.

Blues boss John Reardon

was forced to change his back four when Bob Davies had to withdraw with a pulled muscle. As Steve Vass is also out injured, midfield man Farouk Quraishi switched to left back, Tony Horseman returned to the forward line and Mick Holifield dropped back into midfield.

It may have been these changes, or the strong crossfield wind, that upset Wanderers for the least said about their first half performance the better. Mistakes were rife as the ball bounced awkwardly and there were only a couple of chances created by either side.

Hitchin were the better of two poor sides and they deserved

their 36th minute goal by

youngster Terry Scott. It came

from a corner which hung tan-

glingly in the wind. Wycombe

failed to clear, Grafton got a

touch and Scott was there to nod

home past Peter Spittle. It was a

scrappy goal to give away but full

credit to Scott, who was playing

for Chalfont St. Peter last year,

for taking his chance well. In-

cidentally, the flag kick came

from another former Bucks

youngster, Kevin Mulkern, who

used to play for Amersham

Town.

Whatever John Reardon said

to his players at half-time cer-

tainly did the trick for Wycombe

looked a changed side after the

break. Working harder, they

carved out a series of chances

with some excellent football in

the conditions.

After Dylan Evans had failed

to control a possible chance in

the first minute, the Blues

equalised 60 seconds later when

Dave Archibald was adjudged to

have handled inside his area.

Horseman's penalty was half

stopped by keeper Bradwell and

although it rolled over the line,

referee Drew decided the

keeper had moved and ordered

the penalty to be re-taken.

Horseman hit the ball straighter

but it was enough to beat

Bradwell again.

Encouraged by their success,

Wanderers had their best spell of

the match. They always

threatened when attacking from

the right flank where any crosses

were caught by the wind and

caused havoc in the Hitchin

defence. Horseman had

Bradwell at full stretch to take a

55th minute header, and

Wanderers went ahead for the

first time on the hour.

CRASHED HOME

Ray Brimson lost possession inside his own penalty area and Horseman raced on to drive a shot at Bradwell from a narrow angle. The keeper failed to hold the ball and Harris pounced to crash home a shot from close range.

After Horseman had wasted a chance to sew the game up at 3-1, Hitchin began a 15 minute assault on the visitors' defence which stood up well to the pressure. Keith Mead and Alan Phillips were outstanding at the heart of the back four.

There was more than one occasion, however, when Wycombe hearts were fluttering. Phillips almost headed into his own net and then in the 82nd minute Birdseye's concentration lapsed when playing the ball back to Spittle. A nasty bounce let in Scott but Spittle saved the day by sticking out a boot to deflect the ball away.

Birdseye quickly made amends by firing in a drive at the other end which Bradwell turned round a post and then Mackenzie snatched at a chance at the far post. But Wanderers made the most of the points in the 89th minute with a classic breakaway goal.

Holifield raced over the halfway line after Mackenzie had won the ball. Holifield put Evans clear down the left wing and his perfect far post cross gave Harris time to select his spot and head home.

HITCHIN: R. Bradwell; S. Norris, R. Brimson, D. Archibald, M. Grafton; J. Whishaw, K. Mulkern, S. Baker (sub M. Ward 69 mins); P. Watson, T. Scott, P. Groom.

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, A. Phillips, F. Quraishi, G. Mackenzie, R. Bay, M. Holifield; A. Horseman (sub J. Priestley 83 mins), D. Harris, D. Evans.

Half-time: 1-0. **Goalscorers:** Hitchin — Scott (36). Wycombe — Horseman (67); Harris 2 (60, 89).

Referee: P. Drew (Upminster).

Attendance: 600.

SATURDAY'S FIXTURES

K. O. 3 p.m.

Isthmian League Premier Division: Wycombe Wanderers v Bishop's Stortford.

Kingsmead Athelstan League: Chalfont St. Peter v Redhill, Ruislip Manor v Burnham, Marlow v Uxbridge.

London Spartan League Senior Division: Beckenham Town v Amersham Town.

BOB DAVIES, Wycombe Wanderers' left back who missed Saturday's win at Hitchin, is likely to be out of action again tonight (Tuesday) when the Blues meet Hayes at Loakes Park in the Isthmian League Premier Division.

Davies has a pulled muscle and manager John Reardon does not wish to risk further aggravation to the injury. This means that Farouk Quraishi will stay at left back.

Another player who will be absent is Mick Holifield currently on holiday for a fortnight. John Priestley or Howard Kennedy will take his place in midfield if Quraishi stays at full back.

Steve Pratt, who scored at Staines recently but unable to command a regular place this season, has asked the club for permission to play for Thame United in the Hellenic League. It seems likely that the club will agree but retain first choice on the player.

Unbeaten in six games with five victories under their belts,

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Enfield	12	9	2	1	24	9	29
Tooting	13	9	0	3	18	9	27
Wycombe	13	2	2	10	12	20	
Hitchin	12	7	2	3	18	13	23
Staines	12	6	4	2	17	13	22
Leatherhead	11	6	3	2	20	9	21
Dagenham	14	6	3	5	24	23	21
Staines	11	5	1	5	19	20	20
Barking	11	6	1	4	19	14	19
Carshalton	10	5	3	2	18	10	18
Hendon	13	4	4	5	19	18	16
Boreham W	11	5	1	5	16	19	16
Walthamstow	10	4	3	3	13	14	15
Orpington	10	3	2	4	19	15	14
Hayes	10	3	3	4	17	8	13
Kingstonian	12	2	4	6	13	18	10
Southall	12	2	4	6	12	17	10
Tilbury	11	2	4	5	14	20	7
Woking	11	2	1	8	10	20	7
Leeds	10	1	3	6	19	9	6
Slough	9	1	2	6	10	19	5
Stortford	13	0	2	1	11	13	2